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FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY: SECRET PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

TO: Department of State 2 Enclosures

FROM: LONDON 2950 June 19, 1950 760c.00/6-1950

REF:

SUBJECT: INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON LATVIA

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B6

For Dept. use only.
RECD JUN 22
ACTION OLI
INFO DCR EUR GER

There are attached, as of interest to the Department, copy of two reports regarding conditions in Latvia which were furnished the Embassy [redacted] B6 stated that the reports were prepared by the Latvian Central Committee in Germany on the basis of information obtained from underground sources in the Baltic States.

mls 12167

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY W Gehron DATE 9/1/93
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
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E. DORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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William C. Trimble
First Secretary of Embassy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RECEIVED
JUN 28 1950
OFFICE OF LIAISON
AND INTELLIGENCE ACQUISITION

760C.00/6-1950

Enclosures:

2 Papers regarding conditions in Latvia.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 22 AM 9 35
RECORDS UNIT

Action Assigned to DRE
Action Taken Contents noted
Date of Action June 29
Action Office Symbol LPIEER
Name of Officer V. Prochnow
Direction to DC/R SECRET

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

INFORMATION RECEIVED ABOUT CONDITIONS IN LATVIA.

1. New Soviet armed forces are systematically and according to plan brought into Latvia. They consist primarily of infantry, artillery and tank formations. They come by rail from the Leningrad area. Every week during the night x new trainloads are arriving with soldiers, armaments and tanks.

2. The shore artillery, shore fortifications and naval units are being strengthened on the Kurzeme sea coast. In Liepaja and Ventspils the secret political police is very vigilant and every step of someone arriving there from the outside is carefully followed. The harbour and workshop areas are completely closed to civilians.

3. In the whole territory of Latvia the Russians are building up motor fuel reserves. At the Machine Tractor Stations big petrol containers are being built. In Sece a Machine Tractor Station was established in the former vicarage. Such MTS are also in Daudzeva, near Daudzesa, Nereta and Lielzalve. They all have big reservoirs about 4 metres high and 3 metres in diameter. These reservoirs are painted in camouflage colourings but nevertheless are easily visible from a distance.

4. Russification is continuing. Schools are made particularly active in propagating the idea of Russia as the supreme force in the world and combating religion. This line has been followed all the time but lately it has been stressed more strongly, and a change in this policy is that lately the Russians begin to pay more attention to the qualifications for this job of communist functionaries and teachers.

5. The Russians have begun a compaign of ruthless persecution and "cleansing" of people who occupy more important posts, particularly those of Latvian origin, seeing that they conform in all respects to the party line. Many are replaced by people imported from Russia; others are submitted to constant supervision and control. As the MGB is weaving its spider's web more and more closely the Latvians have become more guarded. The MGB have organised their information service very well and to avoid and circumvent it is very difficult, even by frequent changes of address and going from town to town. Often persons who have been caught in sending letters abroad, although it be only one harmless letter a year, have to vacate posts as civil servants.

6. There is a shortage of seed in the country. The collective farms are managed principally by Russinas. Considerable dissatisfaction is noticeable among Latvian peasants.

7. During the period from April 5th to April 30th all collective farm peasants were required to bring quantities of gravel to the

main roads for general repairs of the principal roads. So as not to delay farm labour collective farm peasants were required to work also on Sundays. The Ieceva Bridge near Jelgava was also repaired by Sunday work. The same applies to the rebuilding and repair works in Krustpils.

8. Lately, in connection with the large influx of Russian soldiers a considerable shortage of living accommodation is felt. Quite frequently a flat of three rooms is inhabited by two or three families; ~~xxfxx~~ this is particularly so in the larger towns. The MGB tries to infiltrate Russian families among Latvian families.

9. The guarding of Russian~~x~~ garrisons has been lately stiffened up, particularly munition, fuel and food stores are being very strictly guarded, the strength of guards having been doubled.

10. The Russian artillery and military transport services still continue to use horses as driving powers. Supply units are manned mainly by Asiatics and older age-group Russians who have not been demobilised. Food in the Russian army continues to be bad; the main foodstuffs are potatoes and various porridges. Uniforms are often torn, tattered and dirty; only officers are better clad.

11. It seems that the Russians have strengthened their air force units in Riga and the neighbourhood. Over Riga Russian air force squadrons are very often seen crossing the neighbourhood of the railway station and going towards the North west.

12. Contact with foreign vessels which come into Latvian harbours is quite impossible. The harbour and its immediate environment is always full of MGB agents. The ships are very carefully searched and the control continues when the ship is already at sea.

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SECURITY : SECRET

Enclosure 2 to Despatch 2950

INFORMATION RECEIVED ABOUT CONDITIONS IN LATVIA. II

1. During the last two months no mass deportations to Soviet Russia have been noticed in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The occupying powers have found new methods of removing the people of these nations: a) Gradual deportations have been practised by MGB and the methods perfected according to their plans. Thus for instance, people from Kurzeme would be ordered to work in Vidzeme, mainly for seasonal jobs or road-building. Then they would be sent further across the frontier to the neighbourhood of Pleskav, Vitebsk or somewhere else beyond the Russian frontier, afterwards, being sent still deeper into Soviet territory. b) Systematic arrests of individual people continue every night; also whole families are apprehended that way in towns as well as in the country. The people thus arrested are concentrated in the regional prisons, and when a sufficient number have been collected - roughly once every two months - they are being sent further; the rate is two or three cattle trucks with barred windows to each prison. The disappearance, i.e., the arrest of individual people is not so noticeable to the rest of the population. The Russians are very careful not to leave any written evidence about their vile deeds. People are called to questionings at the MGB by summonses which are delivered to them by a militia man (policeman). This summons is read aloud and the person in question must sign for the hearing of it, but the document itself is not given into his hands and the militia man takes it away with him again.

2. The feeling of the inhabitants of all three Baltic States is very pessimistic. The spring of 1950 brought famine with it, particularly in the country. In the cooperative stores in the towns there are shortages of bread, meat, milk, sugar; prices are rising also for tobacco and spirits. The living conditions of the army people are being improved; even ordinary Russian soldiers are being seen lately on the streets with brand new, only badly tailored, uniforms. On several occasions officers of the Russian army have said in conversation with private people that there are cosmic ray installations established in Latvia. It is impossible to check this information.

3. During the period March 3rd to 15th summer manoeuvres were held in the Baltic States. Soldiers spent nights under the open sky around camp fires in bivouacs of fir tree branches. The soldiers sang communist songs for entertainment, and thus their camping places could easily be detected. A new weapon in the infantry armaments has been observed; in outward appearance it reminds one of an oxygen cylinder. It is mounted on two rubber wheels and it is moved similarly to the anti-tank gun by attaching it to a truck of the motorised infantry. This weapon could be a special new kind of mine with powerful action and a wide radius.

4. In Riga, Tallinn, Sauliai and Vilnius new strong MVD and MGB units have arrived. It can be assumed that the Russians are preparing for new vigorous forest combing actions. Partisan activities in Latvia, particularly in the neighbourhood of Riga and Daugavpils are very difficult; only women can work more or less successfully. In Liepaja operations are very difficult; Vantspils is easy, and also the towns of Vidzeme. In almost every town, with the ordinary militia (police) the Russians have organised a special service network. The militia men of this special service were plain clothes and patrol a district indicated to them by their commissar. They observe people and make acquaintance with them. Every newcomer is reported. Frequent searches are made in private houses. This hampers partisan activity very greatly. The militia men and even MGB people can be bought but the prices are high. The black market is developing, particularly in food and secondhand clothing.

5. The Machine Tractor Stations are continually receiving additions of new tractors. 70% move on caterpillar chains and in case of war could very easily be transferred for military use. In the country, from 1st March to 10th April, people had to take part in a compulsory collection of fir and pine cones. During the period from May 5th to June 1st, a compulsory re-forestation of burnt-out places in the woods or areas where tress have been cut is to take place.

6. In Riga at the end of April, on all hoardings and on the walls a 35 x 20 c.m. poster in red appeared. It said: "Conscientious citizens! Unmask the fascists and the help-mates of Western plutocrats' spies and saboteurs. Be aware that losses inflicted by the activity, as well as bridges blown up by them, will have to be made good only by you. Be conscientious citizens of Soviet society!" The Latvians used every available opportunity of defacing these posters and making them unreadable or of scribbling ironical remarks on them in blue chalk. The more usual of these remarks were: "Don't be fools". "Let Vanyka be blown up". "Tyrants must be blown up."

7. During the period April 15th to 20th large numbers of small dead fish were observed floating in the Daugava below Salaspils. Gulls and craws did not touch these fish, which showed thatthey had been dead for some time and begun to putrify. The causes of this are not know, but it can be assumed that either some poisonous gasses or acids have found their way into the Daugava or one of its tributaries.

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